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War Is Creeping Up On Us. “What do the Russians Think of Putin”. Paul C. Roberts

By Dr. Paul Craig Roberts
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Gilbert Doctorow is a thoughtful and well-informed commentator on the challenges with which the West confronts Putin.

In his most recent postings, he asks and answers the questions, ***“What do the Russians think of Putin?*** *Does his war of attrition strategy today enjoy support? Or do Russians want to end the War as quickly as possible by a decapitation strike on Kiev?”*

Judging by the discussion on controlled Russian state television, **Doctorow concludes that the thinking class, the top echelons of power, sees another major Western escalation on its way with the provision of long range nuclear capable missiles to Ukraine along with $140 billion euros in stolen Russian assets**. This will prolong the conflict for several years while Europe builds up its war fighting capability. The alternative of an Oreshnik strike on Kiev that would end Ukraine’s fighting ability looks to be the better choice. In short, the conflict has gone on too long. Time to bring it to an end. But can Putin bite the bullet and end the conflict with a victory?

Having watched Putin’s address to the Valdai Discussion Club, Doctorow concludes by choosing to ignore the new and increasing threats the West is presenting to Russia and relying instead on good relations with Trump, Putin has brought himself a big problem of his own making.

Doctorow goes on to say:

> “I have over the past year spoken very critically of Paul Craig Roberts for his repeated denunciations of Putin as the man leading us to WWIII by his constantly turning the other cheek and allowing Russia’s red lines to be crossed. Now, regrettably, I admit that PCR was right. Yesterday at the Valdai Club Putin lost my respect and I think I am not the only one who understood that he is showing cowardice. The biggest loudmouth Russophobe on Capitol Hill, Senator Lindsey Graham must be sipping champagne right now.
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> “After all, the whole sense of the Oreshniks is that they can get the job done without opening the Pandora’s box of tactical nukes. And yet Putin has just pulled up his own red lines with respect to American long-range missiles being supplied to Kiev. A year ago, his policy line was that the supplier of the missiles and the provider of all the target input necessary to operate the rockets (USA) would be considered a co-belligerent, inviting a Russian missile strike in response. And what did we hear yesterday? That these missiles do not change the situation on the battlefield. That is a barefaced lie.

> "The do or die moment for Russia is fast approaching. And with Putin in charge, it looks like 'die.'
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> "I say this as an outsider. After all, it is for the Russians to decide who governs them and they need no coaching from us. But I – and you – are bystanders whose survivability on this planet depends on Russia's leader making the right decisions. His apparent belief yesterday that ingratiating himself with Donald Trump is more important than publicly and forthrightly defending Russia's red lines against what Trump and Merz and Starmer and Macron and Ursula von der Leyen are plotting puts us on a direct path to WWIII."

Reading Doctorow's comments on Putin's Valdai speech, I get the impression that Putin and Lavrov have chosen to evade reality rather than to confront it. I am unsure I would do any better when the reality is nuclear war. But it doesn't have to be nuclear war. **Putin has had the soft voice but not the big stick. Consequently, the Kremlin seems irresolute and vulnerable. Here are Doctorow's comments. Read them and make up your own mind.**

> "Good Americans, bad Europeans: Putin's latest policy position in a nutshell
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> "Yesterday I commented on President Putin's speech to the Valdai Discussion Club gathering in Sochi, saying that it ignored the new and very serious threats that the USA and Europe are presenting to Russia and only repeated the now stale litany of Putin remarks on how the confrontation with the USA and NATO developed from the 1990s to today and how the new world order is unfolding with the support of the Global South.
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> "Actually, the speech was worse than I described.
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> "It was crystal clear from the speech and from his answers in the Q&A that Vladimir Putin is desperately seeking to keep Trump on his side for the sake of normalization of relations, whatever it takes. By doing so, one might reason, Russia will tame the Europeans who have to back down in the face of a US-Russian fait accompli.
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> "It is only in this light that I can explain Putin's very strange decision to publicly support the Trump 20-point 'peace plan' for Gaza that still awaits Hamas approval. True, he adds the condition that Israel must recognize the two-state solution. But that condition gets lost in the bigger fact that yesterday Putin spoke approvingly of Trump's naming Tony Blair to join the planned colonial style Peace Board that Trump himself will head to govern Gaza and Palestine until a suitable self-governing force emerges from some reformed Palestinian Administration. Tony Blair, the unindicted war criminal who encouraged and enabled the murderous, illegal U.S. invasion of Iraq. This same Tony Blair was described by Putin yesterday as a very experienced statesman in whose residence he had spent a day or more at the start of the new millennium, had shared coffee while both were still in their pajamas.
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> "I believe that Putin is ignoring the obvious fact that Donald Trump has only contempt for those who try to ingratiate themselves with him. In this regard, Putin's remarks yesterday have done Russia far more harm than good.
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> "Meanwhile, on the sidelines, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has compounded the damage to Russia's standing by his latest interviews dealing with the question of U.S.

supplied Tomahawks to Kiev. One such interview may be watched in English here.

> "Lavrov is talking nonsense. If Tomahawks end up in Ukraine IT WILL CHANGE THE MILITARY SITUATION. Here again, a leading spokesman for Russia is talking nonsense because the Kremlin is trying to differentiate between the bad Europeans and the good Americans.
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> "Not only are the Tomahawks a serious challenge to Russia's air defenses because they are nuclear capable and may be carriers of a first nuclear strike intended to be a knock-out blow, but the handover of such missiles to Kiev clears the way for Germany's Chancellor Merz to do what he has wanted to do from the moment he took office, to deliver German Taurus missiles to the Ukrainians. Merz was insisting that the USA go through the door first before he would act.
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> "The American Tomahawks represent 40-year-old technology and so may be shot down by Russian air defenses from the very first salvo, but such interceptions are never 100% perfect. Meanwhile, the German Taurus is very modern in design and could do a great deal of damage before the Russians find effective counter measures.
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> "All in all, given the rising threats to Russia coming from Europe which the Russian President is doing nothing to answer directly by setting out clearly Moscow's counter threats, the prospects for Russia winning in its confrontation with the West have received a serious setback by the Kremlin's decision to bet all on good relations with Trump."

Doctorow discusses with Glenn Diesen Putin's mild responses to increasing Western provocations and strikes against internal Russian infrastructure.

Doctorow explains, as I have, that Putin has created a picture of Russia as endlessly tolerant of provocations. Doctorow thinks that Putin's failure to stand up for Russia could result in his replacement. Putin failed to defend any of his declared red lines and now has ceased to declare them. This fact has encouraged escalation. Putin's efforts to reassure the West convinced the West of Russia's lack of resolution. Putin mistakenly thought that the West would respond positively to good will.

People all over the world hoped that Putin would stand up against Washington's hegemony as the Soviet leaders did. The world is tired of being bullied by America's Zionist Neoconservatives. Hegemony has made America a looter rather than a producer. Looting does not produce an economy that benefits the citizens, only the powerful. The distribution of income and wealth in the US is worse than anything imaginable in my youthful years. The American people are not benefitting from hegemony.

Washington's hegemony, mainly in service to Israel, aided and abetted by Putin, is driving the world to destruction.

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Paul Craig Roberts *is a renowned author and academic, chairman of The Institute for Political Economy where this article was originally published. Dr. Roberts was previously associate editor and columnist for The Wall Street Journal. He was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy during the Reagan Administration. He is a regular contributor to Global Research.*

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